



The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 33

Issue 2 June

Article 18

2006

Just Around the Corner: The Paradox of the Jobless Recovery. Stanley Aronowitz.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the [Economics Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2006) "*Just Around the Corner: The Paradox of the Jobless Recovery.* Stanley Aronowitz.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 33 : Iss. 2 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol33/iss2/18>

This Book Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



Stanley Aronowitz, *Just Around the Corner: The Paradox of the Jobless Recovery*. Philadelphia. PA: Temple University Press, 2005. \$49.50 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

The great globalization debate has now been raging for more than a decade but there is little consensus among social scientists about its benefits and disadvantages. While those of a neoliberal persuasion believe that globalization is fostering trade and economic growth and raising living standards for people in many parts of the world, globalization's critics contend that these improvements are concentrated in a relatively few countries and, to make matters worse, are being accompanied by declining standards of living for people in other parts of the world. This argument is most pertinent to the issue of deindustrialization in the Western countries where, it is claimed, the outsourcing of jobs to countries with low wages and limited employment regulation is destroying traditional industrial manufacturing jobs, increasing the rate of unemployment and causing real hardship among families who previously worked in the manufacturing sector in these nations.

This issue is the focus of Stanley Aronowitz's new book which questions the view that the export of manufacturing jobs from the United States only causes temporary and minimal dislocation as new, high-tech and knowledge-based employment opportunities expand. This view is widely held among neoliberal economists, corporate elites and members of the Bush administration who contend that capitalism involves a dynamic process of creative destruction in which relentless innovation replaces outmoded economic activities with new, wealth creating forms of production. Aronowitz recognizes that recent gloomy predictions of economic stagnation have not been accurate, and that the American economy has revealed an extraordinary capacity over the last decade to maintain steady rates of economic growth despite periods of adversity. But he questions the optimists who believe that economic growth inevitably involves the creation of new, high-paying jobs and improvements in standards of living for all. In a meticulously researched analysis, he shows how the history of American economic development over the last two decades has been decidedly mixed, producing a complex pattern in which a sizable

proportion of hard-working Americans have experienced stagnating or declining real incomes while another group of highly qualified and skilled workers have enjoyed improvements in standards of living. In addition, those with sizable assets have benefitted enormously as a result of booming investment opportunities and significant tax cuts. Globalization, outsourcing and creative destruction has not, he contends, brought the promise of prosperity to the great majority of the population.

Aronowitz writes well and makes a persuasive case that will no doubt be challenged by mainstream neoliberal economists. But it will be difficult to undermine the solid empirical data he has amassed to show that the problem of economic growth without sustainable and remunerative employment presents a huge challenge for the future. As many more families experience economic hardship and struggle to make ends meet, the paradox of jobless growth accentuates the wider problem of distorted development and demands a concerted policy response. Hopefully, his call for action will mobilize support from social workers and others who are aware of the glaring problems of poverty and deprivation in American society today.

Caterina Gouvis Roman, Heather Ahn-Redding and Rita J. Simon, *Illicit Drug Policies, Trafficking, and Use the World Over*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, \$75.00 hardcover .

Historically, scholarship examining cross-national drug policy has been limited to the countries of North America and Western Europe. Recently, comparative drug policy has expanded to include less studied parts of the world, such as South America, Russia, and the Middle East. This expansion has allowed researchers to begin the process of synthesizing drug policy information as well as understanding the diverse social, cultural, and political responses to illicit drug use from around the world. Unfortunately, barriers to reliable research such as incomplete and poorly collected data have hampered efforts to effectively compare cross-national drug policies.